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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

7 February 1974

POLAND

Too Many Problems and Too Little Time

The top echelon of the Polish party appears to be juggling its schedule in an effort to resolve its most pressing problems in some logical fashion. The central committee plenum of January 18 reportedly was to have discussed plans for the 30th Anniversary of the Polish People's Republic. Instead, the impact of the international energy crisis evidently forced it to switch its attention to economic problems, specifically wage-price policy. Another plenum has now been called for February 15 to take up the anniversary issue, even though Gierek himself had previously stated that agricultural planning was next on the list. Two central committee meetings within a month are unusual, as are the failures to carry through on the announced topics. Thus, for the moment, the party appears to have shelved its customary methodical ways in favor of improvisation.

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Much Talk, Little Action

As expected, the official visit of Archbishop Casaroli failed to produce an agreement on formal diplomatic ties between Warsaw and the Vatican. According to a brief and largely noncommittal communique issued on February 6, the two sides will simply continue discussions in Rome at some future date. Meanwhile, they have agreed to consider "the establishment of permanent working contacts." Significantly, Casaroli plans to remain in Poland for several more days, probably to brief local church authorities--and primarily Cardinal Wyszynski--on the results of his mission. He may also explore ways to mend the church-state rift that is impeding progress between Rome and Warsaw.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Bad Time for Literature

Pavel Kohout, a dissident Czechoslovak writer, told West German correspondents on February 6 that the literary situation

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in his country is now as bad as it was at the height of the Stalin era. In making this remark, Kohout added his voice to a controversy that began last September when West German Nobel prize winner Heinrich Boell charged that the Czech regime was systematically removing books by eminent authors from libraries and bookshops and eventually destroying them. In a recent issue of the party daily, Rude Pravo, Slovak writer Vladimir Minac attacked Boell, who, he said, made no effort to hear the "other side" of the question. Kohout commented that "it is astonishing that Boell knows more about the real state of affairs than Minac, who lives in Czecho-slovakia."



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